

ITALIAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9783/01
Speaking

Key Messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reaction(s) to it;
- in Part II, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken;
- in Parts I and II, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation;
- in Parts I and II, be ready to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

General Comments

Assessment:

The exam consists of two parts: Part 1 – Discussion of article; Part 2 – Prepared Topic Discussion.

Part 1

Comprehension and discussion (14 marks)

Range and accuracy (10 marks)

Pronunciation and intonation (6 marks).

Part 2

Factual knowledge and opinion (14 marks)

Range and accuracy (10 marks)

Pronunciation and intonation (6 marks).

Part 1 and **part 2** can also be taken in the reverse order, although candidates tend to prefer to start with the discussion of the article that they prepared just before the exam.

The discussion of the article represents a freer and more challenging exercise than **part 2**. Candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to engage in a fairly unpredictable discussion, based initially on an article which candidates read before the exam, then moving on to explore other aspects of the general theme.

Part 2 is the discussion of a prepared topic.

The overall exam is rather long but candidates are generally able to maintain their level of performance over the entire exam, probably because the second part involves a lesser degree of unpredictability. Performances for the two parts of the exam were well balanced with only a marginal higher mean mark for language in **part 2**, as could be expected.

Part 1

Candidates could choose a stimulus card from four of the following, picked at random by the examiner:

- 1 *La funzione della pubblicità* (Theme: Patterns of daily life)
- 2 *Equilibrio tra lavoro e vita quotidiana* (Theme: Work and leisure)
- 3 *Ibernazione: sogno di vita eterna ma per adesso è solo fantascienza* (Theme: Scientific and technological innovation)
- 4 *Sparare o non sparare, questo il dilemma* (Theme: Law and order)

5 *Ecobnb, un airbnb a contatto con la natura* (Theme: Environment)

6 *“Questo lo potevo fare anch’io”* (Theme: Cultural Life/Heritage)

Comprehension and Discussion

Candidates are not required to understand the article in detail, but only well enough to be able to engage in discussion on the issues raised. Candidates were able to outline the main theme of the article, discuss the issues it raised and broaden the conversation to the general theme.

Card 5 was the most popular choice. Candidates feel safe talking about environment as this topic tends to be taught well in all schools. This meant that candidates had a great deal of factual and the subject-specific vocabulary. On the other hand, though, as environment is a well-worn topic, the discussion often lacked originality. The impression was that candidates were eager to air their views on the environment but perhaps did not have very much to offer on the specific issue of *vacanze sostenibili*. Some candidates even thought that the holiday makers had to comply with the requirements to qualify as *ecobnb* rather than the owners.

Conversely, card 6 was not very popular, but those who chose it were able to engage in a lively discussion on the merits or otherwise of contemporary art and to draw parallels with contemporary music or architecture or contrasting it with more traditional forms of art.

Part 2

For **part 2** candidates can choose a topic of their own interest, provided that it is related to the history, current affairs or culture of an area of the world where Italian is spoken. Any topics lending themselves to analysis, evaluation and opinion represent a good choice. The choice of the topic is of paramount importance. Some topics, although well researched, may remain rather dry and unproductive in discussion. Candidates really need to envisage an enthusiastic conversation when choosing their topic. Choosing to talk about an artist, or an individual work of art may lead candidates to prepare much factual information and they are likely to demonstrate what they know about their topic but struggle to maintain a lively discussion. Books and films or political events often lead to good performances because character motivation can always be explored, for example. Of course candidates are free to choose whatever they wish within the parameters set by the syllabus but they should be strongly encouraged to find something they can be truly passionate or enthusiastic about.

Language (range and accuracy)

In terms of language, there was a wide range of competence. Most candidates were able to use complex structures and a good range of pertinent vocabulary. Accuracy was generally well controlled. As could be expected, scores for language were slightly higher for **part 2**, but only marginally so. Even at this level, the most common mistakes remain the use of prepositions, lack of control over agreements, gender and occasionally over verb endings.

Pronunciation and Intonation

Candidates appeared to master the sounds of Italian, in spite of the occasional misplaced stress and mispronunciation of double consonant or vowel sounds.

Conclusion

Most candidates appeared to have fully understood the requirements of this unit, were well prepared for it and performed to the best of their abilities.

ITALIAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9783/02
Reading and Listening

Key messages

- Reading section: candidates are required to target pieces of information sequentially in the texts and adapt them in order to make their answer fit the format of the question. Occasionally a degree of inference or justification is required. Some answers require more than one point.
- The translation question requires a close translation – staying as faithful as possible to word order and meaning as possible. It also includes the manipulation of lexical items that have been presented in the preceding texts.
- Listening section: similarly, candidates are required to target information in the order that it occurs in the listening stimulus and make selective use of the material in order to appropriately and succinctly answer the question.
- The summary question requires adherence to the word count, along with the ability to discern the most pertinent points of the stimulus heard, in accordance with the bullet points given in the question.

General comments

In both parts of the exam, candidates must ensure their answer material ‘fits’ the question; some answers, although apparently targeting approximately the right area in terms of content, fail to constitute a coherent answer to the question.

Comments on specific questions

PART 1

Testo di lettura 1

4. Some candidates stated what Nives and Romano chose NOT to do, thus not directly answering the question.
8. Some candidates answered that Eun-Sun Oh beat her to it in 2010 – careful attention to dates and numbers in texts is always advisable.

Testo di lettura 2

17. When answering in English candidates must take care to use correct English: ‘sustaining’ was not rewarded as a rendering of the ‘sostenendo’ of the Italian text.

Testo di lettura 3

Grammatically, the areas that proved most difficult were: subjunctive after superlative, ‘da + infinitive’, ‘facendo di più’. Vocabulary-wise, many candidates struggled with ‘progredire/fare progressi...’.

PART 2

Brano d’ascolto 1

Careful separation of words was occasionally an issue here. **Question 24** gave rise to several 'una sistenza' for 'una assistenza' and **Question 27** 'l'attenzione' for 'la tensione' (not penalised if 'l'adrenalina' also given).

Brano d'ascolto 2

Candidates are advised to be wary of including too much information, particularly in a one-mark question. In **Question 34** for example, some answers invalidated themselves following confusion as to where the man's car was and if it was parked when it supposedly got the tickets...

Brano d'ascolto 3

Candidates stand by far the highest chance of scoring well on this task if they adhere to the word count. Marks will not be given following the end of the sense unit that contains the 100th word, up to 110 words.

ITALIAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9783/03
Writing and Usage

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- In **Part I**, choose a title on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and a wide range of lexis.
- In **Part I**, plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments.
- In **Part I**, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument.
- In **Part II**, read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s).
- In **Parts I and II**, carefully proofread their responses.

It would be a good idea to give candidates, particularly external candidates, access to previous papers, mark schemes and Examiner reports so that they can get a clear idea of what is expected in a discursive essay.

General comments

Candidates need to develop skills to craft an essay which will enable them to say something of substance. They would benefit from extensive practice in writing on a range of topics. Detailed planning will always benefit candidates. What sometimes appeared to happen is that candidates got into their stride, both in terms of argument and language, quite late in the essay and might have been advised, time permitting, to edit and re-write their essays. As regards language, there may be a misunderstanding about what constitutes idiomatic language. Candidates will be rewarded for language which is recognisably Italian in its structure and lexis, rather than resembling English translated verbatim. Candidates are not required or expected to insert Italian idioms per se. For some candidates it may be better to err on the side of good ideas expressed in simple but accurate language with a range of appropriate lexis rather than the use of over-elaborate expressions to couch an insubstantial point which result in unnatural and thereby non-idiomatic language. The overuse of the subjunctive was particularly evident. Whilst it is important to demonstrate an understanding of the terms of the question in the opening paragraph, particularly through the use of synonyms and relevant vocabulary, it is not necessary to spend time rephrasing or justifying the question itself.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Better answers defined their understanding of democracy. Some answered cogently that the rise of populism and parties of the right in Europe did not signify that democracy was in crisis, but rather that it was working as the people were getting what they voted for. Unsurprisingly Brexit was referred to as evidence that we cannot say a system is in crisis just because we do not like what people vote for. It was important to address the second part of the question. Fewer candidates discussed any alternative political systems, claiming that anything other than democracy, often undefined, was a dictatorship though some did concede that current systems of democracy, e.g. that in the USA, may need reform. Proposals for improving democracy included lowering the voting age, compulsory voting and proportional representation. At times candidates' language was not sufficiently comprehensible to convey ideas on this topic. Some candidates used the title as a springboard to introduce material which was not relevant to the question. No mention was made of undemocratic institutions within western 'democracies'.

- (b) A limited number of candidates answered this question. Better responses addressed the nature of the universality of themes and argued that the exploration of human psychology is timeless in its fascination. Some good examples were given of themes found in Shakespeare which are still relevant today. Candidates who claimed that modern texts were more popular than those written centuries ago might have considered what attributes might make contemporary texts still popular in several centuries' time.
- (c) This was, unsurprisingly perhaps, a popular question. Many candidates alluded to the fact that homework consolidates learning and prepares candidates for the world of work. The main reason against homework proffered was that it was time-consuming and caused stress. Better answers pointed to the fact that stress might be occasioned by poor organisation, which is the real culprit. More astute candidates might have pointed out that those candidates who are involved in competitive and time-consuming extracurricular activities, be it sports or music, are generally those that get their homework done on time because they have good time management skills. To access higher bands candidates could have considered why homework is set and the different types of homework (reading and learning vocabulary, for example, which are individual rather than class activities). Some answers highlighted the fact that there is not enough time in the school day for teachers to assess candidates' development, so homework was useful in this regard. It was also argued that homework gave candidates the time and freedom to research a subject in more detail and might engender a passion for it. No mention was made of after school homework clubs or similar programmes, or the possibility of candidates to use lunchtime to start their homework. One rather unconvincing argument given against homework was that, as candidates might cheat to find answers on the internet, homework was a waste of time.

As regards family relationships, it could have been argued that parents who took an active interest in their children's homework might represent more 'united' families. Candidates could have looked at what constitutes a united family. The supposition that candidates would spend more time with their families, had they extra time, was challenged by some who felt that time gained would be spent playing video games. Surprisingly perhaps, no reference was made to circumstances in which candidates do not go home to parental contact time after the school day – those with working parents, or those in residential settings.

- (d) This was also a popular question. Many candidates expressed the simple view that tourism is beneficial to the economy of a country so any limit on numbers of visitors would damage the economy and therefore be undesirable. It was pointed out that changing styles of travel meant that hotels suffer in favour of Airbnb and so tourists bring less money than they used to. Better answers did acknowledge that the term *siti turistici* encompassed a wide range of locations from buildings such as art galleries to natural phenomena such as the Galapagos islands. Better answers would have clearly explained the dilemma faced by different sites, with appropriate exemplification, contrasting the economic benefits brought by tourism (which go far beyond the entrance fees paid to museums/galleries etc.) with the (often inadvertent) environmental and structural damage caused by overcrowding. Most answers expressed the view that the government would have to legislate to reduce numbers (or improve tourist behaviour), thereby ignoring the power of either the managers of the sites or market forces in this domain. More analytical answers could have imagined what form a limit on numbers would take – e.g. timed entrance tickets vs prohibitive pricing, which might hit the poorer traveller harder. Examples abound, from the high-profile debate about cruise ships in Venice to the recent ban on climbing Ayers Rock. More nuanced answers would have discussed the effect of overcrowding on the tourist as well as the local resident or environment. The visitor to an overcrowded art gallery, such as the Uffizi, will have a less rewarding 'tourist experience' than a visitor who can see the paintings clearly in a gallery which limits numbers through timed slots, however neither are necessarily damaging the artwork. Overcrowding on Everest does however damage the environment and can even be fatal. Some tourists visit places precisely because they are popular, so to limit numbers would perhaps have the effect of over-reducing numbers to a point where the industry fails. Many tourists will flock to certain well-known sites, such as the National Gallery in London, while ignoring equally good but less well-known attractions in their own cities, so there might be an argument in favour of publicising less well-known but equally good attractions to take the pressure off the major sites. Marketing has a role in tourism, just as in any industry. Candidates who suggested that the promotion of ecotourism might help the problem of overcrowding needed to consider how this might be appropriate in the context of visiting urban centres. Some candidates took the opportunity to write about the damage caused by tourism to the environment in general terms without focusing sufficiently on the specific issue of overcrowding.

- (e) Apart from the few candidates who took issue with whether 10 years was an appropriate time frame, most responses mentioned how fast-developing technology, in the guise of online dictionaries, would facilitate communication in other languages. Examples of the usefulness of such on holiday and in the world of work were given but little consideration was given to how this would work in practice. In general, little thought was expressed about what constitutes communication and there was no mention of fact that we would still need linguists to write the computer programs that so many people are apparently going to depend upon. More thoughtful answers might have distinguished between environments where machine translation might be beneficial (e.g. tedious, repetitive tasks such as weather forecasts) and those where it might be of limited use, such as in interpersonal relationships or in translation of literature. One candidate offered a nice example of the impossibility of a computer translating Ungaretti's *Mattina* as a case in point. A few candidates concluded that rather than make language learning redundant, technology would actually facilitate language learning. The popularity of the App Duolingo could have been cited in evidence. Surprisingly little mention was made of the cultural and social benefits of mastering foreign languages, although several candidates referred to the psychological benefits claimed by scientists. Reassuringly, some candidates wrote of the pure enjoyment of learning languages for which technology was redundant.

Part II – Use of Italian

There was a wide range of performances in **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, with many candidates showing an excellent knowledge of some of the most advanced grammatical structures. Some subjunctive triggers were missed and the present subjunctive of *togliere* in **Question 10** eluded all but a few candidates.

Exercise 3 was generally well done with very few candidates scoring fewer than half marks and there were one or two candidates at the top end who got almost everything right. The two questions which caused most confusion were 13 and 20.

ITALIAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9783/04
Topics and Texts

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in **Part I**, choose a title about which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and a wide range of lexis;
- in **Part I**, plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments;
- in **Part I**, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument;
- in **Part II**, read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s);
- in **Part I** and **Part II**, carefully proofread their responses.

General comments

To score well in this paper candidates should read the questions carefully and give due consideration to both parts of a two-part question. Schools are reminded that candidates are advised to use two texts only in the Topics section so as to provide more a detailed and convincing analysis. Using three may dilute the message. In addition, candidates should spend time planning which extracts from the books and films best exemplify their response to the question rather than use examples they have prepared which might have a more tenuous link. Candidates need to demonstrate clearly how the examples chosen make their point and not leave it for the Examiner to draw an inference. They are reminded of the need to address the question and to define key terms within it in their own words to demonstrate understanding. Language marks are awarded on a consistent use of accuracy, complexity and lexis throughout the paper. Occasional use of (possibly rote-learned) phrases which may contain structures which are superficially complex, will not by themselves access the higher bands unless it is evident that the candidate can manipulate the language consistently throughout their work. Where candidates are not particularly confident, it is generally better to write more simply in order to ensure that their message is clearly conveyed. They will often attract more content marks in this way. Quotation for its own sake is not rewarded but accurately reproduced citations can be used effectively if they clearly illustrate a point. Candidates should be encouraged to produce evidence that they have read texts in the original language, where translations in English exist.

The most popular topics chosen this year were *L'immigrazione* and *L'Italia in giallo* although candidates answered on most topic areas. Familiarity with the plots and main themes of texts and films was generally good and several candidates were able to bring clear evidence from the sources to support assertions. Less successful answers were those which did not adequately respond to the precise demands of the question, often because an understanding of key terms was not evidenced. Some candidates' responses suffered from a lack of clarity due to a less confident command of the language or from an approach which was more descriptive than analytical. Candidates who referred in a detailed and balanced way to two sources generally did better than those who referred to all three in a more superficial manner.

The most popular texts this year were those of *Dante*, *Levi*, *Leopardi* and *Tabucchi*. As usual, candidates are advised to spend time planning their essays and it is particularly important to define any specific terms given in the question to illustrate their personal understanding of them. Some candidates might benefit from writing out the question in their answer booklets in order to refer to it while preparing their plan as they are unable to get full credit for sometimes extensive knowledge of the text without an adequate framework. It is expected that, writing in English, candidates should be able to be versatile enough to engage fully with the terms of the question and not merely try to adapt essays perhaps written to practice questions, as appeared to be the case in a few instances. With regard to commentary questions, it is worth noting that, given that the candidates have the text in front of them, they are expected to analyse the text in detail and not merely use it as a springboard for making general observations about the book/play/poet etc. This includes highlighting

style, technique and lexis as well as content. Less confident candidates might be discouraged from approaching the commentary in preference to the **b** and **c** questions which offer clearer direction.

Comments on specific questions

Part One: Topics

Question 1

L'EPOCA FASCISTA

- (a) The vast majority of candidates who chose this topic answered this question. This question required careful consideration and needed to distinguish between the position of women in the 'traditional' (Catholic) culture of family values that would have pertained at that time under any political regime and what was specifically different about Fascism in order to show understanding of the period. A patriarchal society, as described by many, might be expected to protect women, yet Anna is killed alongside Quadri. Most candidates mentioned that women were expected to stay at home, keep house and produce numerous children (in the *battaglia demografica*). Antonietta and Giulia in *Il Conformista* both respond positively to the challenge of having lots of children. Women, however, have a dual role as sex objects in *Il Conformista*, as evidenced by Marcello's sexual attraction to prostitutes and Anna. Some evidence from *Un Giorno Particolare* was proffered in Emmanuele's treatment of his wife. It could have been noted that the only man to respect Antonietta and to encourage her to think for herself is a gay man, himself exiled by the regime. Many candidates indicated that women did not have responsible jobs in this period. One exception to this is the concierge, who appeared to act as a spy for the regime. There was also something to be said about the different types of motherhood exemplified in the source material. Some candidates referred to the fact that women were treated by men as possessions, chattels, rather than individuals. More insightful answers might have looked at the position and treatment of other members of society, such as homosexuals, exemplified by the character of Gabriele in *Un Giorno Particolare* (and possibly Lino in *Il Conformista*), and compared their position to that of women. No candidates drew evidence from *Fontamara* this year.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 2

L'IMMIGRAZIONE

- (a) There were some nuanced answers which amply exemplified the discrimination and abuse suffered by immigrants in Italy. To fully answer the question, it would have been helpful to pick apart the different types of discrimination (on grounds of race, ethnicity, and gender) and different types of 'fundamental' human rights which may or may not be being violated in the case of immigrants. For those candidates citing Polchi's text it was important to note that the book is based on the premise that immigrants were striking for their human right to representation in the voting system. This throws up the question of legal vs. illegal migration. References to counterexamples or to a changing picture were welcome. Some answers were rather vague and did not develop their arguments or did not adequately explain the significance of statistics offered. To access the highest bands, it would have been necessary to differentiate between institutional discrimination and individual acts, sometimes carried out by other immigrants, not just Italians. Candidates could also have alluded to measures put in place and organisations that exist to protect immigrants' rights, such as trade unions and even the immigration authorities.
- (b) A good answer to this question would have specified an understanding of what constitutes '*integrazione nella società italiana*'. That might mean legal access to housing, jobs at all levels and require payment of taxes. In whose interest is it that so many immigrants work in the black economy? Many candidates referred to the prevailing marginalisation or exploitation of immigrants found in *Terra di Mezzo*. Some answers found grounds for optimism for the future even despite the current evidence. There are clearly different points to be made about legitimate and illegitimate immigrants here. Candidates who cited *Terraferma* pointed to the fact that optimism can be inferred from the way that some of the islanders changed their attitudes to the migrants once they had a personal connection with them. This was an important point to be developed and applied to all three sources. Some candidates offered examples of integrated immigrants found in *Blacks Out*,

including the many entrepreneurs who have started their own businesses and even employ Italians. Better responses pointed out that integration is partly a question of time and offered evidence that focused on trends leading to possible future integration, such as education of the children of migrants. The case of the schoolgirl Alice was offered as an example of a hope of future integration. Good answers pointed to the fact that immigrants are so essential to Italian economy and society that they will eventually be integrated *per forza*. A few candidates questioned how instrumental immigrants could be in helping themselves become integrated by learning the Italian language and adopting its culture; the case of the petrol attendant Ahmed in *Terra di Mezzo* appearing to be a case of failed integration despite his best efforts.

Question 3

LA GRANDE GUERRA

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 4

LA DONNA NELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 5

L'ITALIA IN GIALLO

- (a) This question asked candidates which portrait of Italian society was painted by the detective novels they had studied. Most candidates had studied *La forma dell'acqua* and *Ad occhi chiusi* and were able to allude to various problems inherent in society, such as unemployment (exemplified in the former), violence against women (exemplified in the latter) and nepotism (exemplified in both). Better answers mentioned the hierarchical structures and corruption found even in the world of justice. Answers which interpreted society rather narrowly, for example as setting, did not provide enough relevant material. A detective novel, by definition, focuses on that part of Italian society affected by or perpetrating crime rather than society as a whole and it was expected that candidates would comment upon this. Some candidates did refer to other aspects of Italian society, such as gastronomy, found in the texts.
- (b) Some very good answers showed in-depth knowledge of the texts and were able to put them in wider contexts, considering the nature of the genre and the impact of a good plot or convincing investigator on the reader. The investigators were described in convincing and relevant detail. Many candidates demonstrated an awareness of the wider societal issues highlighted by the writer by means of the plot. Responses would have been strengthened by considering both parts of the quotation rather than insisting that the plot was all-important and ignoring the investigator or vice versa. Better answers were able to point to how the investigator's personality was often integral in some way to the development of the plot. Less successful answers seemed to misunderstand the terms *trama* and even *giallo* and others appeared to bypass the question by claiming that the setting was all-important and writing exclusively about that.

Part Two: Texts

Question 6

DANTE

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) The question invited candidates to choose a particular episode from the *Inferno* which they felt to be most significant for Dante's spiritual awakening. There were some excellent answers, which demonstrated a clear understanding of Dante's spiritual journey. Beatrice, Francesca and even

Satan were all credited with the task of shaking Dante the love poet out of his misunderstanding of the true nature of love and setting him on track, through the allegory of Dante the pilgrim's journey, towards spiritual awakening and knowledge of God's divine intent. The best answers were able to trace the journey in clear stages.

- (c) A clear demonstration of understanding of the term 'characteristic' and an attempt to answer the second half of question would have improved many answers. On occasion it appeared as if candidates were trying to shoehorn a prepared answer on the '*contrappasso*' to fit the title, often with unconvincing results. Other candidates seem to confuse the term characteristic with character and offered Dante's encounter with Satan as a characteristic of Hell. An answer which referenced the vivid imagery and physical structure might have yielded clearer and more pertinent answers. More philosophical approaches (Hell is a place devoid of the presence of God/full of the power of God – both argued for) needed nonetheless to address the second half of the question.

Question 7

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 8

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9

FERRANTE

- (a) The commentary passage was a rich source of material, revealing, as it does, much about the Lila-Lenù relationship, including themes of friendship, rivalry, education and family relations. Candidates were able to point to the major themes but answers would have been improved by closer attention to Ferrante's writing, noting her spare style, in which a few words speak volumes, her particular play with lexis, and the nature of Lenù's narration. Almost every few lines were worthy of a paragraph of analysis. Candidates should avoid entering into too much narration of events elsewhere in the book in this type of question, although they need to contextualise any comments.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10

LEVI

- (a) This question was approached with a varying degree of success. Some candidates were able to successfully point to parts of this introduction to the work which introduced themes which would later be expanded. Better answers alluded to Levi's style and his personal engagement. An intelligent close reading, effectively a line by line analysis, did reveal both an understanding of the predicted content and an appreciation of his style. The key element of the title phrase in this extract was discussed at length, although some candidates displayed a confused understanding of its significance.
- (b) This was by far the most popular question. 'Ambassador' was the key word in the title and it was important to demonstrate an understanding of what this role entails. Some candidates produced very clear responses with detailed exemplification highlighting how, following his exile, Levi acted as a spokesperson and advocate in a non-judgmental tone for a marginalised and hitherto

unknown group who had no voice of their own and no power. He did this partly by describing their lives but also by analysing the historical and geographical reasons for their plight and attempted to propose a solution to the *questione meridionale*. The northerner Levi's education, professional medical training and ability to articulate and engage with the more powerful were also put to the service of the *contadini* during his exile and elicited the trust of the peasants. Several responses criticised Levi for failing to return to his former 'posting' once he had returned to life in the North and seemed mistakenly to accuse him of re-joining the northern bourgeoisie, illustrating a confusion between what Levi writes in the opening of the book and his real life. (Levi did in fact return to Aliano in death and is buried there.) Less successful answers did not go beyond discussing what Levi had come to understand of the lives of the *contadini* and therefore did not target the terms of the question with enough precision, despite providing a detailed narrative.

- (c) The question required candidates to both identify the different literary styles (e.g. narrative, descriptive, lyrical, journalistic, detached, engaged, campaigning, confessional etc.) contained within the novel and to assess their impact on the reader. Some good answers were able to illustrate the different styles and point to the fact that both the detached journalistic style and the more intimate memoir style invoked trust in the reader which in turn contributed to the reader's understanding of the problems that Levi was describing. It was disappointing that some candidates who clearly had many intelligent things to say about the book did not address the question adequately, either through misunderstanding the term literary styles and targeting instead a few techniques and/or by disregarding the second part of the question.

Question 11

TABUCCHI

- (a) No candidates chose the commentary question.
- (b) Candidates were invited to explain the importance of the theme of death in the text. There were some very good answers displaying good knowledge of the text and an understanding of the themes. It was sensibly argued that Pereira lives surrounded by death, from his work as a writer of an obituary column to his ongoing conversations with the portrait of his dead wife. However, it was the death of Rossi which acted as a catalyst to spur Pereira to action to his life, which some candidates likened to a living death.
- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12

DE CRESCENZO

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate
- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate

Question 13

LEOPARDI

- (a) The commentary question on *Alla luna* invited candidates to explain what the poet is attempting to express and to discuss the techniques and imagery employed in the poem. To do this successfully, candidates needed to be familiar with the poem, including its context within Leopardi's oeuvre, and to stick closely to the text. Poetry, particularly in such a short form, is concentrated and distilled and it would not be too much to analyse it line by line, both in terms of content and techniques, in order to reveal its greater sense. Hence candidates who offered little more than vague interpretations were unlikely to have access to the higher bands.
- (b) This question invited candidates to explore Leopardi's use of imagery from nature and its effect. Candidates were able to cite the recurrent use of natural images such as the moon, landscape, birds and weather to convey both mood and man's plight. Leopardi's changing attitude to nature over the course of his short life was also commented upon. The most common poems to be cited

were *L'infinito*, *La quiete dopo la tempesta*, *Il passero solitario* and *Alla luna*. In order to gain access to higher bands candidates might have given a more detailed analysis of the effect of the use of natural imagery, particularly in poems of his later life such as *La Ginestra*.

- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.